



Shaping the force

BY GEN. JOHN P. JUMPER
U. S. Air Force Chief of Staff

Over the last decade we've seen a dramatic change in our security environment. We reduced our active duty force by nearly 40 percent—from 608,000 to 375,000—while remaining engaged around the world at levels higher than at any time during the Cold War.

To accommodate the changing world, we have completely transformed our Air Force, from one that dealt with the Soviet and North Korean threats into an agile Air Expeditionary Force, capable of rapidly responding anywhere, with tailored forces ready to deal with any contingency.

Our transformation has yielded outstanding results. But, for the past two years, we have exceeded our mandated active duty end strength of 359,000. Under the President's declaration of a national emergency, our excess numbers are appropriate.

While this is a temporary situation fueled by the Global War on Terrorism, we now need a plan to return to the authorized levels. By the end of 2005, we should reduce the size of our active force by 16,000 people, and we must reshape the force to correct existing skill imbalances and account for a new range of missions in the Global War on Terrorism.

I know it may not be clear why our active duty end strength needs to decrease while we are still heavily engaged around the world. Let me explain how we got to this point and what we are doing to fix it.

As a result of several years of high operations tempo, we were given some latitude on how quickly we came down to the legal end strength limit of 359,000. We also suffered an unprec-

edented recruiting problem during the 1990s. Recruiting has traditionally not been a problem for the Air Force, but a robust economy late in the 1990s had us falling short of recruiting goals for the first time since 1979.

As a result, we took in thousands of people using skill mix assumptions that are no longer applicable to the demands of the Global War on Terrorism. We now have several career fields over-manned, while suffering shortages in others. Our task now is to reduce the force while also fixing this skill mix imbalance.

One area that has affected our end strength is Stop Loss—a program we used in 2002 and 2003 to stop people from separating. When Stop Loss was lifted, many of those Airmen who intended to separate elected to stay.

Other policies associated with the Global War on Terrorism also influenced our end strength. We swelled the force by implementing programs that brought prior-service members and ARC volunteers on active duty to fill known critical skill shortages.

Perhaps the most significant factor affecting our strength was, and still is, retention. Our goal for first term-enlisted retention is 55 percent, but, at the end of Fiscal Year 2003, it was 61 percent. Across the board our retention is up, and for good reason! In addition to an increased sense of patriotism, the tax and pay changes—some implemented for Global War on Terrorism—really work. Imminent Danger Pay, Hardship Duty Pay, Combat Zone Tax Exclusion, Family Separation Allowance and a host of others, plus bonuses we pay to ensure we can retain critical skills, all add up to a very attractive compensation package that turned the tide toward staying in uniform.

We are proud of our retention

rates and that our people are electing to continue to serve.

To start our reshaping effort, we have set new targets for recruiting, from 37,000 this year to 35,600 in Fiscal Year 2005 and 34,500 in Fiscal Year 2006.

We are also working on fixing our stressed career fields. Where we are short of people for the rotational requirement, we've taken action to direct more of our recruits into the stressed career fields. However, we know we can't replace 5 and 7-levels with people right out of technical school.

Part of our force shaping will have to be done by retraining and shifting experienced people from over-staffed career fields. Many of our Airmen are willing to make the shift, and we will encourage retesting and support for waivers to qualify for retraining into critical skills. But in some career fields, our ability to absorb more people is often limited by training facilities and capacity. We will work to unclog any training backlogs. I am dedicated to reducing our stressed career fields and putting in place the right incentives to retain the people we task the most.

In addition to looking at retention, recruiting, and retraining, we are also looking at where our people are—we have Airmen serving in jobs outside the Air Force who don't deploy as part of our Aerospace Expeditionary Force. Some of these, such as joint positions and some defense agency positions, require uniformed people, and we benefit by having an Airman's perspective in those jobs.

Others, however, may not require a uniformed person, or a military person at all. These are positions that we are working to legitimately reclaim into our ranks.

Until very recently, we had not made all the manpower cuts we agreed to during the 1990s. We've now made the adjustments in our books—over 13,000 positions eliminated—but we still need to move some of the people. That means we have Airmen with advanced training and professional skills filling positions that no longer exist.

It's hard for me to argue to the Congress that we don't have enough people when we should be using some of our Airmen in other required positions.

All of these efforts will be combined with several additional force shaping tools to get to our authorized manpower levels and to get the right skills in the right places.

We will include initiatives such as restricting reenlistment in overage career fields, voluntary transfers to the ARC shortening service commitments, limiting officer continuation for those deferred for promotion, commissioning ROTC cadets direct to the ARC, limiting reclassification of those eliminated from technical school, rolling back separation dates and officer and enlisted retraining.

We are out of balance for the contingency world in which we live. I recently returned from the AOR where I met people who had been deployed for more than 200 days. They take great pride in the job they are doing, but we are being unfair to them and their families.

If at all possible, our goal is to give every qualified Airman who wants to stay in the Air Force the opportunity to do so. In addition, we will use every tool to shape the force we have available to avoid the extreme measures that were used in the early 1990s.

Saddam Hussein buried his airplanes in the sand rather than face your Air Force. That's respect, and you continue to earn it every day.

Secretary Roche and I are proud of you, and are honored to serve with you. We will continue to remain closely engaged on these issues to ensure that we reshape the force into one that is suited for the 21st century while sustaining the standards of excellence and morale that are emblematic of the world's greatest Air Force.



3 TEAM KIRTLANDers picked for Officer Training School



**STAFF SGT.
GEORGE ALLEN**

377th Logistics
Readiness Squadron



**STAFF SGT.
TERRI ZUBER**

Space and Missile Systems
Center, Detachment 12



**STAFF SGT.
JASON FREEMAN**

512th Rescue Squadron

Outstanding CDC graduates announced

The following scored 90 percent or better on their Career Development Course end of course exam:

**377th Logistics Readiness Squadron
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
NATIVIDAD N. GUERRERO, 92**

**377th Medical Group
STAFF SGT. NATASHA F. MORRISON, 90
STAFF SGT. REFUGIO L. HONORATO, 90
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS TOMAS P. MATA, 91**

**377th Air Base Wing
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARK C. HOLLIDAY, 90**

**377th Security Forces Squadron
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
CORY D. BRAILSFORD, 90
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS BYRON J. WISE, 90
AIRMAN ADAM T. DAGGS, 90**

**Air Force Research Laboratory
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JARED A. NARLOCK, 92**

**342nd Training Squadron Detachment 1
TECH. SGT. DARRELL R. MAYERS, 91
STAFF SGT. BRENT L. MANEY, 92
MASTER SGT. KENNETH S. LOFTIS, 94**

Phillips Research Site, DE announce quarterly winners

Phillips Research Site and Air Force Research Laboratory, Directed Energy Directorate announced their quarterly winners.

**MASTER SGT.
ROBERTA
WAGNER**

Senior
Noncommissioned
Officer of the
Quarter

No photo available



**SENIOR AIRMAN
WILLIAM LABB III**
Airman of the Quarter



**TECH. SGT.
JAMES A. CABEZAS**
Noncommissioned Officer
of the Quarter



**CAPT.
KIRSTIE TALBOT**
Company Grade Officer
of the Quarter

Dress, appearance Web site set up

A Dress and Appearance Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil provides answers to your questions.

If your questions need research, e-mail to afpc.dress@randolph.af.mil.

Expecting mothers can plan child care before new arrival

Expecting mothers can add their names to the child development centers' waiting list during their third trimester.

Also available to the new mothers will be the Mildly Ill Child Program.

Call the Gibson Child Development Center, 846-1103, and the Maxwell Child Development Center, 853-5521.